technological development of the Central Asian Republics of the C.I.S. as per the news-item entitled "Iran seeks Indian Aid for C.I.S. Republics", which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated the 12th March, 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) to (c) Iran has conveyed to us at various levels its desire for cooperation in the expansion of relations with the countries of the Central Asian region.

We have discussed with Iran in the recent period our interest in working out transit facilities through Iran for the flow of goods and services between India and the Central Asian Republics. Technical level consultations are presently under way for exploring the possibilities of such cooperation.

Agreement between India and Myanmar

268. DR. SANJAYA SINH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Myanmar have recently signed agreements for control of drug trafficking and for curbing separatist movements along their borders; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) and (b) India and Myanmar signed an agreement on mutual cooperation in controlling drug trafficking across the Indo-Myanmar border, on March 30, 1993, in Yangon, during Foreign Secretary's visit to that country. The Agreement has been signed with a view to developing channels for exchange of intelligence and information, and cooperation with the Government of Myanmar in the matter of combating illicit traffic in drugs.

No agreement has been signed between the two countries for curbing separatist movements along their borders.

Role of India in West Asia Peace Talks

269. DR. SANJAYA SINH : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Israel visualised an important role for India in the West Asia Peace process to help speed up agreement with the Arabs, as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 12th March. 1993, under the news-item entitled "Israel pins hopes on India in West Asia Peace Talks";

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is the reaction of the Indian Government in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) India is committed to promoting efforts towards achieving a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East Peace Process acceptable to all parties concerned. It is in this context India was welcomed by the Arabs as well as Israel to participate in the Peace Process as an important non-regional Asian entity. In response to the invitation, India has already participated in all the meetings of the Working Groups under Multilateral Track held so far. India continues to extend support to the Peace Process as it offers a unique opportunity to reach a settlement of the long outsanding issues.

Transfer of Arms by China to Myanmar and Pakistan

270. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that reports about huge arms transfers by China to Myanmar and Pakistan, including medium range missiles and aircraft are causing concern to the Indian Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what remedial action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) and (b) Government have come across reports of the sale of arms by China to Myanmar. Government are also aware of the extensive defence cooperation between China and Pakistan including supply of Chinese aircrafts, missiles and other weapons and transfer of sophisticated arms technology.

(c) The Chinese Government has been made aware of our concern in this regard.

Government have and will continue to monitor all developments having a bearing on India's security and take adequate measures to safeguard it.

Indo-U.S. Relations

271. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that there are two major irritants in Indo-U.S. relations at present, namely, the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the missile technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action Government propose to take in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA) : (a) and (b) Our relations with the US are multi-faceted and wide-ranging. While there are shared perspectives on many issues, differences exist on the NPT and issues relating to missile technology proliferation. India's position on the NPT is well-known. On the issue of missile technology, Government are committed to a policy of self-reliance.

(c) Government are discussing issues relating to disarmament, non-proliferation and regional security on a bilateral basis with the US Administration. This dialogue is intended to facilitate a better understanding of each other's positions.

Taking over of ICWA

272. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have received any representations for taking over of the management of ICWA;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware of the deterioration in the working condition and salary of staff in the council and if so, what action has been taken by Government in this regard;

(d) whether Government are considering various measures including possibility of introducing a Bill in Parliament for the takeover of the Council's management to improve the ICWA and restore its original standards; and

(e) if so, by when the working of ICWA is expected to be improved ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHEED) : (a) and (b) Numerous representations have been received by Government from individuals, staff association and other bodies asking Government to take over the management of the ICWA.

(c) to (e) Government are aware of complaints of deteriorating working conditions in the ICWA including staff grievances. Various measures for revitalising the functioning of the ICWA at an early date are under consideration.

Problems faced by ICWA staff

273. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to sanction grant to ICWA's present management without solving the problems of its staff;